

Listeriosis

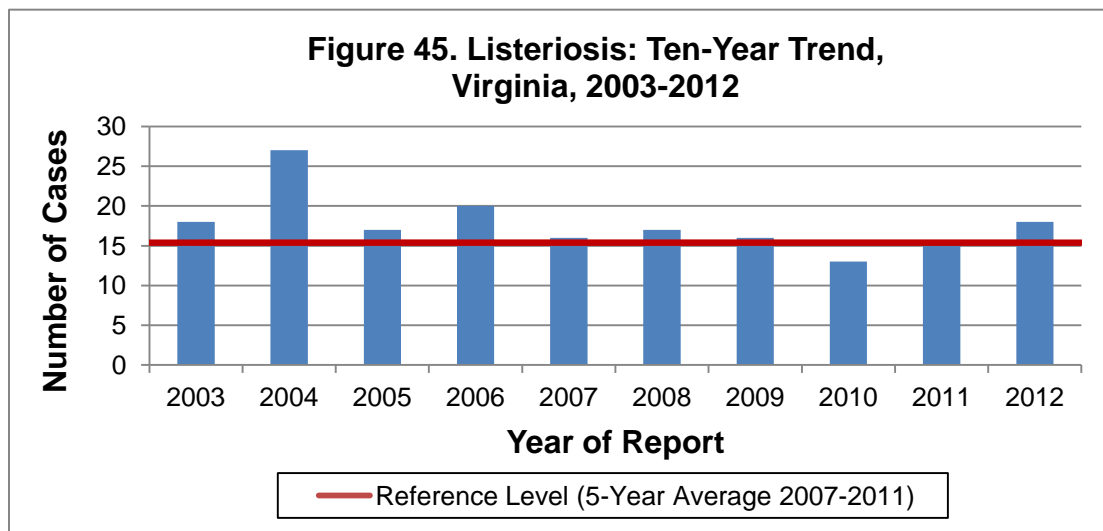
Agent: *Listeria monocytogenes* (bacteria)

Mode of Transmission: Ingestion of contaminated foods or beverages.

Signs/Symptoms: Typically, fever, headache, muscle aches, and sometimes gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting. Infection can lead to serious disease, including shock and inflammation of the brain and the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord (i.e., meningitis). Among infected pregnant women, miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery, or neonatal infection may occur.

Prevention: Preventive measures include safe food preparation (e.g., thoroughly cooking or reheating food from animal sources and washing raw vegetables). High risk foods (e.g., unpasteurized dairy products) should be avoided.

Other Important Information: Persons at higher risk include pregnant women and their unborn babies and newborns, and persons with weakened immune systems.



Eighteen cases of listeriosis were reported in Virginia during 2012. This is slightly higher than both the 15 cases reported in 2011 and the five-year average of 15.4 cases per year (Figure 45). The 60 year and older age group had the most cases in 2012, with 11 (incidence of 0.7 per 100,000), but the highest rate occurred among infants (1 case, 1.0 per 100,000). No cases were reported in the 1-9 and 30-39 year age groups, and one case was reported in each of the 10-19 and 20-29 year age groups. Rates were similar in the black and white populations (0.1 and 0.2 per 100,000, respectively) and among females and males (0.3 and 0.2 per 100,000, respectively). Incidence rates among the regions ranged from a low of 0.1 per 100,000 in both the southwest and northwest regions, to a high of 0.4 per 100,000 in the northern region. Although cases occurred consistently throughout the year, 9 of the 18 cases were reported between August and October. Three cases were associated with pregnancy, two of which were infections confirmed in the mother and one which occurred in a neonate. There were three deaths due to *Listeria* infections among Virginia residents in 2012; all three deaths occurred in females.